

Case Study: Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson

The Individual in History: Actions and Legacies

The goals of this case study are to:

- Use Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson to
 - Examine the impact of the New Deal on African Americans
 - Evaluate the role and contributions of Eleanor Roosevelt to the New Deal.
 - Acknowledge/recognize that 2009 will be the 70th anniversary of Marian Anderson's concert at the Lincoln Memorial.
- Introduce students to some essential history thinking skills including
 - Using secondary sources to establish a historical context
 - Working effectively with primary sources

Grade Level

This longer case study could be used by US history teachers in high school or middle school with modifications. For middle school students: identify and define challenging vocabulary, take more time to model primary source analysis, and reduce number of primary sources and/or excerpt these sources. Time estimated for high school: approximately two class periods, and for middle schools approximately three class periods.

National History Standards

Era 8: The Great Depression and World War II (1929-1945)

Standard 2A: Understand the New Deal and the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt

Key events related to Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson

1909

- Niagra Movement convenes and later becomes the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) pledging to promote racial equality.

1932

- Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected president

1933

- FDR takes office as president and begins first hundred days of the New Deal

- NAACP proposes an anti-lynching law. FDR denounces lynching, but refuses to confront the power of the southern Democrats. "The Southerners ... are chairmen or occupy strategic places on most of the Senate and House committees," FDR explains. "If I come out for the anti-lynching bill now, they will block every bill I ask congress to pass to keep America from collapsing."

1935

- The Black Cabinet, first known as the Federal Council of Negro Affairs, becomes an informal group of African American public policy advisors to President Franklin D. Roosevelt. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt supports this group. By

mid-1935 there are 45 African Americans working in federal executive departments and New Deal agencies, including Mary McLeod Bethune who serves as director of minority affairs in the National Youth Administration.

- NAACP declares federal anti-lynching laws its top legislative priority
- Costigan-Wagner Anti-lynching Bill is introduced. The bill would punish sheriffs who fail to protect their prisoners from lynch mobs. ER supports this bill but FDR refuses to support it because he believes that he would lose the support of Southern Democrats in Congress and lose his entire New Deal program.

1936

- February – Eleanor Roosevelt invites Marian Anderson – a world famous African American contralto – to perform at the White House.
- FDR is reelected president in a landslide.

1937

- A sharp decline in the economy, the “Roosevelt Recession,” saps the president’s popularity.

1938

- Eleanor Roosevelt attends a meeting of the interracial Southern Conference for Human Welfare in Birmingham, Alabama. When the police commissioner insists that the meeting be segregated in compliance with the city’s Jim Crow statutes, ER pointedly places her chair in the area separating the white and African American delegates.
- Marian Anderson appears before integrated audiences in the finest auditoria in Atlanta, New York, Boston, St. Louis, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Memphis. She accepts Howard University’s request to give a benefit performance for their School of Music (her earlier performances there drew increasingly larger integrated crowds – indicating the need for larger concert space).

1939

- Washington DC, like most major urban areas at this time, is a segregated city with segregated schools.
- January 9 – Howard University applies to the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) for use of their auditorium, Constitution Hall, which seats 4,000. The DAR refuses Howard University’s application for Marian Anderson to perform in Constitution Hall.
- February 26 – Eleanor Roosevelt resigns from the DAR.
- February 27 – Eleanor Roosevelt uses her *My Day* column to announce her resignation from the DAR because of the group’s refusal to allow Marian Anderson to perform.

- April 9, Easter Sunday – Marian Anderson performs on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial for an audience of 75,000 people; the concert is broadcast on national radio.
- July 2 – Eleanor Roosevelt presents Marian Anderson with the NAACP’s highest award, the Spingarn Medal, in Richmond, Virginia.
- September 1 – Hitler invades Poland; Britain and France declare war; World War II begins.

1940

- Franklin D. Roosevelt is elected to third term as president with overwhelming support of white liberals and northern blacks.

1941

- June 25 – FDR signs Executive Order 8802 creating the Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC), which bans racial discrimination in any defense industry receiving federal contracts. A. Philip Randolph, working with Walter White and Mary McLeod Bethune, forced FDR to address this issue by organizing the 1941 March on Washington Movement to protest racial discrimination in the defense industry and the military. They threatened to bring more than 100,000 African Americans to demonstrate against congressional resistance to fair employment. FDR sent Eleanor Roosevelt and New York City Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia to negotiate with the March leaders. ER returned telling FDR that their plans were firm and that only an antidiscrimination ordinance would prevent what promised to be the largest demonstration in our capital’s history. FDR agreed and signed this order, but refused to address the issue of segregation in the military, which had been one of Randolph’s original concerns.
- December 7 – Japan attacks Pearl Harbor and the U.S. enters World War II.

Strategy

1. Hook: Show students the photograph of the Marian Anderson concert, courtesy of the University of Pennsylvania Rare Book and Manuscript Library, without a caption or explanation, and have them work in pairs to look carefully at the photo and write down what they notice and list any questions they have about the photo.



- Students might notice: the enormous crowd, some familiar buildings in Washington and so place it in Washington DC, photographers with tripods, that men are wearing hats and so a photo from the 30s or 40s, that a man is playing a piano, and a woman is standing in front of the piano – possibly singing, that this photo is familiar from the newsreel footage shown at the 2009 Pre-Inaugural Concert at this same location.
 - Students might ask: Why are all these people there? How many people were there? Is this a demonstration, and if so for what cause and where are the speakers? When did this event take place?
2. Reconvene students as a whole group and have them share what they noticed and the questions they have. Then tell students that this is a photo of Marian Anderson, a world famous African American contralto, singing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in a free concert for more than 75,000 people on Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, while millions more listened on radio. Explain that they will investigate how and why this event occurred.
 3. On an overhead projector or via a computer read, highlight, and discuss “Key events related to Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson” to establish a historical context for this event. Use these events as a preview or review, depending whether students are just beginning or have already studied the New Deal. Either way, this is a good

place to have students consult secondary sources, including their textbook, to (re)introduce themselves to some of the people, places, and issues of this period.

4. Once students have at least a basic familiarity with these events, explain that they will not only investigate how and why the huge outdoor Marian Anderson concert occurred, but also figure out what it tells us about the impact of the New Deal on African Americans and about Eleanor Roosevelt's role in the New Deal.
5. To accomplish this, students will examine a selection of primary sources. Be sure that they understand how primary sources differ from secondary sources. Before students do this on their own, recap and expand on the notice/question/context process that they used with the introductory photo.
 - When students **notice**, ask them to discuss, and record what they see or read in each document and frame their own **questions**, suggest that they consider who wrote or created the document, the purpose and intended audience, and do a close reading (being aware of what is said and the language used to say it).
 - Students should also begin to put the document into **context**, situating it and the events it reports in place and time.
6. Best to model this process with students using the Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Mrs. Henry M. Robert, Jr. February 26, 1939. See **Teacher Notes** at the end of this case study for examples of what students might notice and question, as well as some context for this letter and the other primary sources listed below.
7. Next direct students to work in pairs or small groups to examine a selection of primary source documents to figure out what each tells us about the impact of the New Deal on African Americans and about Eleanor Roosevelt's role in the New Deal. Students in pairs or small groups can work with all the documents or the teacher can distribute different documents to each pair or group. Another option is to set up stations around the classroom each with one or two documents (depending on their length) and have newsprint and markers for students to list what they notice for each document and the questions they have.

Sources include:

- Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Mrs. Henry M. Robert, Jr. February 26, 1939, courtesy of the Franklin D, Roosevelt Library, included below

February 26, 1939.

Henry M.
My dear Mrs. Robert:

I am afraid that I have never been a very useful member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, so I know it will make very little difference to you whether I resign, or whether I continue to be a member of your organization.

However, I am in complete disagreement with the attitude taken in refusing Constitution Hall to a great artist. You have set an example which seems to me unfortunate, and I feel obliged to send in to you my resignation. You had an opportunity to lead in an enlightened way and it seems to me that your organization has failed.

I realize that many people will not agree with me, but feeling as I do this seems to me the only proper procedure to follow.

Very sincerely yours,

- *My Day*, February 27, 1939 by Eleanor Roosevelt included below

WASHINGTON, Sunday—Here we are back in Washington. I woke this morning to what sounded like a real spring rain. The grass outside my window looks green and, though I suppose we will probably have a blizzard next week, at the moment I feel as though spring had really arrived.

I am having a very peaceful day. I drove my car a short distance out of the city this morning to pilot some friends of mine who are starting off for a vacation in Florida. I think this will be my only excursion out of the White House today, for I have plenty of work to do on an accumulation of mail and I hope to get through in time to enjoy an evening of uninterrupted reading.

I have been debating in my mind for some time, a question which I have had to debate with myself once or twice before in my life. Usually I have decided differently from the way in which I am deciding now. The question is, if you belong to an organization and disapprove of an action which is typical of a policy, should you resign or is it better to work for a changed point of view within the organization? In the past, when I was able to work actively in any organization to which I belonged, I have usually stayed in until I had at least made a fight and had been defeated.

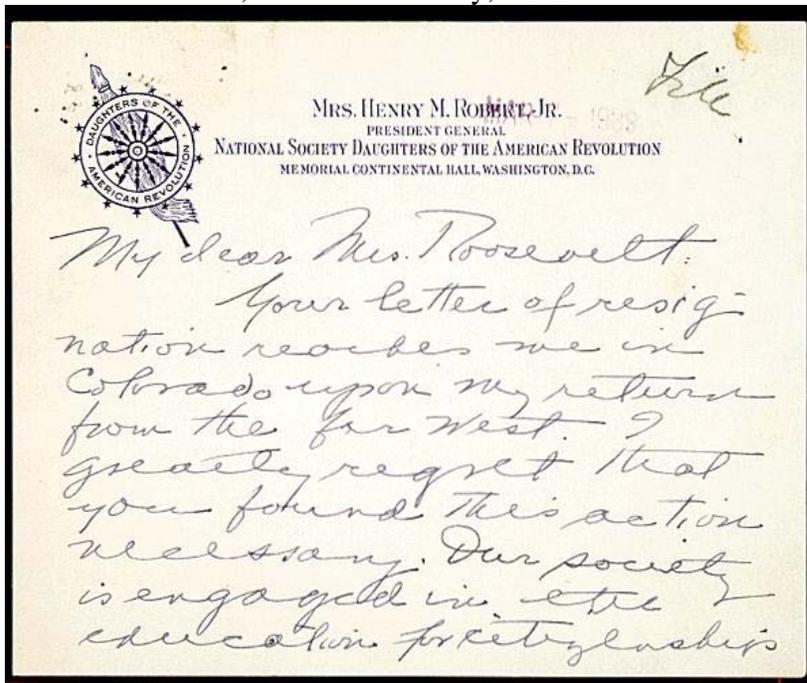
Even then, I have, as a rule, accepted my defeat and decided I was wrong or, perhaps, a little too far ahead of the thinking of the majority at that time. I have often found that the thing in which I was interested was done some years later. But, in this case, I belong to an organization in which I can do no active work. They have taken an action which has been

widely talked of in the press. To remain as a member implies approval of that action, and therefore I am resigning.

I have just seen some people who are arranging for the Coronado Cuarto Centennial Celebration in New Mexico in 1940. All the plans for this celebration, which will begin in May 1940, sound interesting and delightful. New Mexico has many historic spots. There is beauty and an almost foreign interest in this state which has so many ties with Spain and the South and Central American countries. I hope that 1940 will see a great awakening of interest in this part of our nation. More of our American citizens than ever before should see this land of sunshine and color. I, for one, will make every effort to make the rounds of all the exhibitions which will be available during the summer following the opening of this celebration.

While we are speaking on interesting things in the West, let me tell you that I have been sent a pamphlet by the "Save the Redwoods League" of Berkeley, Calif., which pictures commercial exploitation of these beautiful redwood trees in the State of California. Anyone who has ever taken the drive up from the Yosemite to the State of Oregon, cannot fail to have an unforgettable picture of these giants of the forest. They have stood thousands of years. Perhaps some of them have reached maturity, but it seems to me a wicked thing to out them down when that time arrives. Can not either the State or the Nation take a hand in preserving these forests?

- Letter from Mrs. Henry M. Robert, Jr. to Eleanor Roosevelt, courtesy of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, included below



and the humanitarian service in which we know you to be vitally interested.

I am indeed sorry not to have been in Washington at this time. Perhaps I might have been able to remove some of the misunderstanding and to have presented to you personally the attitude of the Society.

With best wishes always,
 Sincerely,
 J. Edgar Hoover

- “Marian Anderson to Sing for King and Queen,” *Washington Afro-American*, March 18, 1939 below, used with permission from the *Afro-American Newspapers Archives and Research Center* included below

MARIAN ANDERSON TO SING FOR KING, QUEEN

MAR 18 1939

Marian Anderson, contralto, and recent center of nation-wide protest following a color bar against her by the Daughters of the American Revolution, will make a special appearance before the King and Queen of England at the White House in May, it was learned, Friday.

The concert is to be one of the features of the English royal couple's visit to America.

Miss Anderson will appear in a public farewell concert on April 13, at the Philadelphia Academy of Music. The barring of Miss Anderson from Constitution Hall in Washington by the D.A.R. resulted in Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt's resigning from the organization.

Following nation-wide protest from persons in all walks of life, the District of Columbia's Board of Education rescinded its action of refusing her the use of a white high school auditorium.

It was revealed in Boston on Wednesday that several Daughters of the American Revolution resigned before Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt protested the organization's alleged refusal to allow Miss Anderson's use of its Washington hall.

- "Visiting King and Queen to Hear Marian Anderson," *Washington News*, April 10, 1939 included below

Wash. News 4-10-39

Visiting King and Queen to Hear Marian Anderson

By EVELYN PEYTON GORDON

By now you probably have read how many people braved the chilly winds of Potomac Park to hear Marian Anderson sing yesterday afternoon. You know that she wore mink and an orange velvet blouse. You know that she thrilled thousands more who listened to her on the radio. You know that Mrs. Roosevelt, her champion, didn't return from Hyde Park in time for the concert, and that there was no White House representative there.

Little Mrs. Harold Ickes, red-headed and fur-coated, sat with rapt eyes on the artist, whose program began as soon as Mr. Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, had finished a brief introduction.

Perhaps you don't know that it was Mrs. Caroline O'Day, member of Congress from New York, who, with Asst. Interior Secretary Oscar Chapman, escorted the singer to her stand. Justice and Mrs. Hugo Black arrived just before the intermission and were as much a focus of the cameras as was the artist. Justice Black is from Alabama. Sen. Warren Austin of Vermont was on hand with a party of friends; Sen. Joseph Guffey of Pennsylvania was accompanied by his sisters, Miss Ida and Miss Fauletta Guffey, and by his brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Miller.

WRAPPED IN FURS

While the listening thousands huddled in heavy coats, officials on the stand and in the few seats arranged for invited guests, wrapped themselves warmly in furs. We spotted the Republicans' great "white hope," Sen. Robert Taft, with Mrs. Taft; Sen. Arthur Capper, Sen. Robert Wagner, listening with closed eyes; Treasury Secretary Morgenthau, with Mrs. Morgenthau, who wore Easter purple ribbons on her black hat and a bunch of purple violets on the silver fox cape; Sen. Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri; Mrs. Herbert Feis, in beige tweeds; Mrs. Gifford Pinchot, wife of the former Governor of Pennsylvania,

her brilliant red hair under a cinnamon-brown hat, and wearing a suit of brown and henna striped tweeds.

But what you haven't guessed are some interesting facts about Mr. Kosti Vehanen, Finnish accompanist for Marian Anderson. We met this quiet, middle-aged artist the other night at dinner. He is unassuming, gentle, and a great pianist. He played for us a little and then told us of his years with Marian Anderson. Eight years ago in Stockholm he met her, and has been her accompanist ever since. As a European, he doesn't understand what all the furore about her singing in Washington means. He only knows that she is "one of the

world's great voices, and a pleasant person with whom to work."

TO SING FOR KING

In discussing the situation, Mr. Vehanen was most interested in Mrs. Roosevelt's part in all the prelude to yesterday's concert. He even went so far as to say that next summer during the visit of the King and Queen of England, Marian Anderson will be the only artist invited to sing at the White House! Arrangements are not yet completed, but the plan now is for a concert following the state dinner in honor of Their Majesties, with Marian Anderson as the soloist—accompanied, of course, by Mr. Vehanen.

Other interesting visitors whom we met at dinner with Mr. Vehanen were Mr. and Mrs. Alvaro Aalto of Finland. Mr. Aalto is the architect for the Finnish Pavilion at the World's Fair, and is the foremost architect of Finland. His designs are extremely modernistic and include, besides famous buildings in his homeland, interesting designs for furniture. Mrs. Aalto is also an architect of note. In fact, she ranks right with her husband in her profession. Tall, with titian red hair, blue eyes, and a placid face, Mrs. Aalto wore, the other night, a severely plain black velvet gown, long sleeved and high necked. Her only jewelry was a heavy necklace of brass made in an intricate design, and a ring fashioned of brass wire and set with a small piece of chipped china resembling lap lazuli. Her shoes were chiffon sabots of scarlet and black.

* * *



Mrs. O'Day



Mr. Morgenthau

- “Remarks of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Luncheon of the Washington Round Table of the National Conference of Christians and Jews,” April 13, 1939 from Allida Black article , “Championing a Champion: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Marian Anderson “Freedom Concert,”” excerpted and included below

Arguing that Americans “ought to be more grown up” so that “we do not develop intolerance along any line,” the First Lady pleaded with the religious community assembled before her to follow the dictates of their consciences. “We should really try to stand always with the people who are trying to be tolerant and to act justly ... and to strive to ... keep from judging other people harshly when they do not always achieve our ideal.” With the complexities of the Anderson affair fresh in her mind, Mrs. Roosevelt concluded her remarks with the following reflection:

“What we should strive to do is accept the facts, face the truth, and make up our minds that we will try to keep ourselves and all the groups and people we can tough in the spirit of real trust, real democracy, and real charity toward all people.”

- Letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Walter White, Secretary of the NAACP, June 13, 1939, courtesy of the Franklin D, Roosevelt Library, included below

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 13, 1939

*Greeting
President Roosevelt*

Dear Mr. White:

The opportunities of a democratic people to participate in national progress are legion. Their responsibilities for sharing in the achievement of that progress are equally great. We delight in recognizing the contributions which members of the Negro race have made to American life and the part which they have had in the progress of the nation.

My sincerest wish for all of you is that your opportunities may be increasingly shared and your responsibilities continuously accepted in helping the Negro race to hold fast to the advancements already made and in moving forward to higher planes of accomplishment. As an integral group in our American democracy we look to you to uphold its ideals, to help to carry its burdens and to partake of its blessings.

In extending cordial greetings to the Thirtieth Annual Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, may I express the hope that the Negro race will find steadily expanding fields in which to serve with industry, loyalty and distinction.

Very sincerely yours,

Eleanor Roosevelt

Mr. Walter White,
Secretary,
National Association for the Advancement
of Colored People,
69 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

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- Photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt presenting the Spingarn medal to Marian Anderson, July 2, 1939 included below and excerpts of ER's remarks in her presentation.



Excerpts of ER's remarks in her Spingarn award presentation, from Allida M. Black, "Championing a Champion: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Marian Anderson "Freedom Concert.""

Rather than specifically tailor her remarks to NAACP supporters and African Americans, ER chose to address issues which all Americans must confront.

"... First and foremost, we must have whatever rights of citizenship are ours under the Constitution. Then we must have education for everybody." She pleaded with her audience to "face well the problem that people cannot grow up good citizens unless we are concerned about the environment of all our people; not just a group here and there but all our people... I always think that it must be a tremendously gratifying thing to feel that you have won out over very great difficulties. If everything was in your favor, if you did not have to surmount any great mountains, then you have nothing to be proud of. But if you feel that you have special difficulties, then you must indeed be proud of your achievement." Mrs. Roosevelt concluded that Marian Anderson "developed herself as an individual... and had the courage to meet many difficulties [with] great dignity."

In her acceptance speech, Anderson argued that these words were as applicable to the First Lady as they were to herself: "I feel it a signal honor to have received the medal from the hands of our First Lady who is not only a first lady in name only but in every deed."

8. Students report out their findings: what did they notice and what questions do they have about each source? If the class used the circulate-to-stations option, each pair or small group could share out a composite report using the newsprint.
9. Next, use **Teacher Notes** to supplement, correct, and expand on students' observations and questions, and particularly to provide a more complete historical context.
10. At this point it will be useful to refocus students' attention on their original task: to figure out what this evidence tells us about the impact of the New Deal on African Americans and about Eleanor Roosevelt's role in the New Deal. Ask students what conclusions they have reached and record their thoughts on the board or newsprint.
11. Share with students Allida Black's observations on the legacy of this event for Eleanor Roosevelt and for African Americans:

The Marian Anderson venture taught Mrs. Roosevelt a valuable lesson. She clearly saw the impact she had when she used her column for political persuasion. In 1939, Mrs. Roosevelt was just beginning to use "My Day" as her own political forum. The Marian Anderson controversy and the response it generated from her readers showed Eleanor Roosevelt the direct impact she had when she spoke out on a political event. She received more mail supporting her resignation from the D.A.R. than she did on any other issue she associated herself with in 1939. Gallup and other public opinion polls revealed that her backing of Anderson increased her popularity in all areas of the country, except the Deep South, and even there, the decrease was minuscule. Consequently, this experience reinforced (her) venture into politics and helped steel her for the 1940 campaign. ... The political and organizational lessons this event taught her about coalition building and the power of her column would not be overlooked.

But perhaps no action so clearly evokes Eleanor Roosevelt's experience in (the Anderson affair) that the finesse with which she arbitrated the deadlock between Franklin Roosevelt and A. Philip Randolph over the establishment of a Fair Employment Practices Commission in 1941. Recalling the ease with which she was able to mobilize Walter White's and other civil rights leaders' opposition to the post-concert anti-D.A.R. demonstration underscored her recognition of the severe determination with which the March on Washington Committee approached the issue of fair employment in the defense industries. Mrs. Roosevelt recognized that this concern could not be settled by arbitration and acted to promote results acceptable to both parties involved. So strong a role did the First Lady play in facilitating Executive Order 8802 that Walter White credited her with playing "so major a part" in resolving the dispute. But ever the political realist, she knew that persistent, active monitoring of the FEPC was just a beginning. "I hope," she telegraphed A. Philip Randolph after he informed her that he cancelled the demonstration, "from this first step, we may go on to others."

12. Wrap up/ assessment: select or adapt one of the options below for your students:

- a. “During the New Deal African Americans made significant progress.” To what extent is this statement accurate? Use evidence from this case study to support your answer.
- b. Looking back from the vantage point of the 70th anniversary of Marian Anderson’s concert at the Lincoln Memorial, write a feature story or profile focusing on the role of Eleanor Roosevelt in this event and its impact.
- c. Have students fill out a 3-2-1 chart and share with the class. 3 = tell three things you learned from this case study, 2 = tell two things that surprised you, and 1 = tell one thing you would still like to know.

References:

Web sites

The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Project, a chartered research center at The George Washington University, makes Eleanor Roosevelt’s written and audio-visual record accessible to scholars, teachers, students, and policy makers around the world and to those actively engaged in defining human rights in their own time.

<http://www.gwu.edu/~erpapers/>

National Archives and Records Exhibit: American Originals, I on Eleanor Roosevelt and Marian Anderson

http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/eleanor.html

Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum

<http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu>

Articles and Books

Allida M. Black, “Championing a Champion: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Marian Anderson “Freedom Concert,”” Presidential Studies Quarterly, Fall 1990, 719-736.

Teaching With Documents: Using Primary Sources From the National Archives, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 1989.

Teacher Notes

	Notice	Question	Context
Letter from Eleanor Roosevelt to Mrs. Henry M. Robert, Jr. February 26, 1939	The first sentence to Mrs. Robert is a bit self-deprecating. She does not mention Marian Anderson by name but refers to her as “a great artist.” In a courteous but forthright tone ER notes that this organization has missed an opportunity to lead and has set an “unfortunate” example. The date is about two months before the April 9 concert.	Who is the letter from? (Though the signature is missing we are told it is from ER.) What is the organization referred to? (Daughters of the American Revolution, DAR). Why is Marian Anderson not named? Why does ER take this action?	Before approaching the DAR for Constitution Hall, leaders from Howard University and the NAACP tried to find an auditorium in the DC public schools that would be large enough for the sizable integrated audiences that usually attended Anderson’s performances. The DC Board of Ed. refused to let Anderson sing in the auditorium of its largest high school unless she agreed to segregated seating, which she would not do. ER’s choice: how to support Anderson without upstaging the local community or further angering the powerful Southern Democrats? She wanted her actions to be seen as a response to a national rather than a local issue – so as the most prominent daughter of the American Revolution – she chose to resign from the DAR. (ER was a member of a family who had come to America in 1640 and had produced 2 US presidents.)
<i>My Day</i> , February 27, 1939 by Eleanor Roosevelt	Between a chatty opening and a description of her travels, ER shares her dilemma. She debates with herself – and her readers – how to respond to an organization of which she disapproves: resign or not? Since she can’t be active, to stay would imply approval.	What was <i>My Day</i> ? Why does ER not name the DAR or Marian Anderson?	<i>My Day</i> was ER’s nationally syndicated column published 6 days a week from 1936 to 1961. At its height it appeared in 90 newspapers in all parts of the nation, providing ER with a reading audience of 4,034,552. ER encouraged her readers to write to her, often

			incorporating their stories, questions, and criticisms into her column, transforming the column from diary to part political tutorial and part public debate.
Letter from Mrs. Henry M. Robert, Jr. to Eleanor Roosevelt	This letter is handwritten, has no date. Mrs. Robert acknowledges and “greatly regrets” ER’s actions. She states that the DAR shares ER’s interest in education for citizenship and humanitarian service. Mrs. Robert writes that, if in DC, she might have removed some of the misunderstanding.	When was the letter written? What was the DAR’s concept of education for citizenship and humanitarian service?	The DAR had adopted a rule excluding African-American artists from the Constitution Hall stage in 1932 following protests over "mixed seating," blacks and whites seated together, at concerts of black artists.
“Marian Anderson to Sing for King and Queen,” <i>Washington Afro-American</i> , March 18, 1939	Readers of this newspaper were likely Afro-American. The date here is about 3 weeks before the April 9 concert, but after the “nation-wide protest” and it notes ER’s resignation from the DAR. Also notes that the DC Board of Ed. rescinded/took back their refusal of the white high school auditorium. Announces that Anderson will appear at the White House for the visit of the King and Queen of England.	Who were the King and Queen of England and why was their visit so important? What was the DC Board of Ed. policy?	King George VI and Queen Elizabeth were the first British monarchs to visit the US. The District government haphazardly enforced the local separatist ordinances. District citizens often overlooked Jim Crow customs when attending cultural events at both federal and private concert halls.
“Visiting King and Queen to Hear Marian Anderson,” <i>Washington News</i> , April 10, 1939	This newspaper was not targeted to a particular racial group. It is dated the day after the Anderson concert and is mostly about that concert, the headline seems misleading. It has a chatty, society page feel. ER was not at the concert. Harold Ickes	Why didn’t ER attend? It is likely that she did not want to upstage Anderson by drawing attention to herself. Who was Caroline O’Day? She was a Representative from	The audience of 75,000 was mostly African American, though with a few New Deal notables there as well. Ickes who introduced Anderson, in addition to being the Sec. of the Interior, was a past NAACP chapter president. That Supreme Court Justice

	gave the introduction. It describes Kosti Vehanen, Anderson's Finnish accompanist.	NY and a friend of ER.	Hugo Black, a white Alabamian, attended was notable. Absent were Sec. of Agriculture Henry Wallace, into whose departmental restaurant no African American dared come; and Vice President John Nance Garner, who disapproved of ER's action.
"Remarks of Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Luncheon of the Washington Round Table of the National Conference of Christians and Jews," April 13, 1939 (see excerpt below)	ER's language here is quite different from that in her <i>My Day</i> column and her letter above. She seems to be speaking to people who think more like she does. Her choice of the words "tough in the spirit of real trust, real democracy, and real charity toward all people" stand out. She seems to be mobilizing supporters to keep up their difficult but valuable work.	What was the National Conference of Christians and Jews? The NCCJ was founded in 1927 and its objectives included fighting bias, bigotry, and racism, and promoting harmony between different groups. (It is now called the National Conference for Community and Justice and welcomes people of all faiths.)	The night before ER spoke to the NCCJ, she learned that a small group of civil rights activists planned to picket the DAR's upcoming general convention. She wired Walter White to ask if he could stop the demonstration because she was concerned both for the demonstrators and for eroding the public support she and others had worked to develop. The demonstration did not occur. Clearly ER was a political pragmatist.
Letter from Franklin D. Roosevelt to Walter White, Secretary of the NAACP, June 13, 1939	FDR wrote this letter on official White House stationary. His language is positive, congratulatory, and cordial to the NAACP: "We delight in recognizing the contribution...to the nation." He describes the NAACP as integral to the nation and mentions "the Negro race" three times.	Who was Walter White?	Walter White was executive secretary of the NAACP from 1931 to 1955. Capitalizing on his pale skin to blend into riotous white crowds, he investigated more than 40 lynchings and dozens of race riots. A close friend and ally of ER, the two worked together to lobby for anti-lynching legislation, to abolish the poll tax, to improve access to education, to support Marian Anderson's 1939 concert, and to challenge segregation in the defense industries.

<p>Photograph of Eleanor Roosevelt presenting the Spingarn medal to Marian Anderson, July 2, 1939</p> <p>Excerpts of ER's remarks in her Spingarn award presentation.</p>	<p>Both ER and Marian Anderson appear very pleased and appreciative of each other. It is clearly an important ceremonial occasion</p>	<p>What is the Spingarn medal? The Spingarn medal is awarded annually by the NAACP for outstanding achievement by an African American. It began in 1915 and continues today. Other recipients include: Thurgood Marshall (1946), Jackie Robinson (1956), Martin Luther King, Jr. (1957), and Duke Ellington (1959).</p>	<p>Walter White asked ER to present this medal to Marian Anderson. The ceremony took place on Independence Day weekend in Richmond, the birthplace of the Confederacy. The demand for seats was so strong that tickets ran out and White convinced NBC and other radio affiliates to broadcast ER's remarks live.</p>
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